

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-17 are pending. Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, and 11-13 have been amended. No claim has been canceled or added. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Applicants traverse the rejection. Claim 1 has been amended. The term "first action" and "second action" are amply explained in the specification (see third paragraph on page 21 and Figs. 8-11) and believed not to be vague or indefinite.

Claims 1-11, 13-14 and 16-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Kara. Applicant traverses the rejection. The claimed embodiment relates to using an identifier code of a medium to perform selected customer-relation-management (CRM) functions. Based on the identifier code received from a user, certain information about the medium is obtained and appropriate CRM actions are taken. For example, if the identifier code indicates the user has provided a medium that was distributed as a free sample, he or she could be asked if he or she wishes to buy a new batch of medium (see Fig. 8).

Kara does not disclose the concept of performing a CRM function based on an identifier code of a medium. Kara discloses indicia 16 that is used for security or authentication purposes (col. 5:57 to col. 6:7). Accordingly, Kara does not disclose, "accessing a database using the identifier code received from the user...; performing a specific action according to a result of the accessing step..." That is, a first action associated with the first CRM information is performed if the identifier code received from the user corresponds to the first identifier code stored in the database and a second action associated with the second CRM information is performed if the identifier code received from the user corresponds to the second identifier code stored in the database. Claim 1 is allowable at least for this reason.

Claim 13 recites, "generating customer-relation-management (CRM) information corresponding to an identifier code of a medium to be distributed to a user, the medium being suitable for printing a value indicium thereon to produce a value stamp, the identifier code being suitable for distinguishing the medium from at least one other medium; storing the generated CRM information in a database system, wherein the database system includes CRM information

corresponding to a plurality of media; providing the medium to a user having access to a data processing system; receiving from the user over the network the identifier code of the medium to be used to purchase a value stamp; and retrieving the CRM information corresponding to the identifier code; and performing a task associated with the CRM information." Kara does not disclose the above recited features. Claim 13 is allowable at least for this reason.

Claim 17 recites, "generating customer-relation-management (CRM) information corresponding to a serial number of a medium to be distributed to a user, the medium being suitable for printing a value indicium thereon, the serial number uniquely identifying the medium; storing the generated CRM information in a database system, wherein the database system includes CRM information corresponding to a plurality of media; providing the medium to a user having access to a data processing system; receiving from the user over the network the serial number of the medium to be used to purchase a postage stamp; retrieving the CRM information corresponding to the serial number; and determining whether an affiliate of a postage service provider requires an additional supply of the medium upon examining the serial number, wherein the affiliate is the user or a provider of postage medium to the user, and wherein the service provider is an agent authorized to provide the postage stamp to the user." Kara does not disclose the above recited features. Claim 17 is allowable at least for this reason.

Claims 12 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kara. Applicant traverses the rejection. Claims 12 and 15 depend from claims 1 and 13, respectively, and are allowable at least for this reason.

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PATENT

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,



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